



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: May 9, 2000
Release Number: 00-33

Contact: Dave Helfert (202) 205-6740
Internet Address: www.sba.gov/news/

SBA ADMINISTRATOR AIDA ALVAREZ MEETS WITH EGYPT'S FIRST LADY, SUZANNE MUBARAK

CAIRO - U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Aida Alvarez began her meetings in Cairo today with Egypt's First Lady, Suzanne Mubarak. Administrator Alvarez is in Egypt this week to launch the SBA/Egypt Partnership to expand trade and strengthen small business ties between U.S. and Egypt.

"Mrs. Mubarak and I had an exceptionally warm and cordial meeting," said Administrator Alvarez. "We share common perspectives on building stronger, more diverse economies in our two nations, including the creation of opportunities to expand the important role played by women business owners.

"We discussed the potential for SBA-style Women's Business Centers and microlending programs in Egypt," continued the Administrator. "And, Mrs. Mubarak was particularly interested in the results gained from President Clinton's 1995 White House Conference on Small Business, and in our National Small Business Week, which recognizes the contributions of small businesses to America's unprecedented economic growth."

The SBA Administrator will meet Wednesday and Thursday with Egyptian Prime Minister Atef Ebeid and Medhat Hassanein, Minister of Finance and Economy. She will also meet with representatives of the lending industry and a group of women business leaders, and visit a number of small business locations.

The SBA initiative sets in motion the U.S.-Egypt Partnership for Economic Growth and Development, signed in 1998 and known as the Gore-Mubarak Partnership. In addition, the Administrator will co-chair the inaugural meeting of the SBA Initiative's binational steering committee. The initiative is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

-0-

For more information on all of SBA's programs for small businesses, call the SBA Answer Desk at 1 800 U ASK SBA, or visit the SBA's extensive Web site at www.sba.gov.

###